CLAIMS

1. A dough intermediate, comprising;

a dough intermediate formed from a mixture, said dough intermediate having a shape intended to produce aesthetic features upon subjecting said dough intermediate to a finishing step, said aesthetic features created through stamping, cutting, slicing or combinations thereof to produce lobes, sections, portions or combinations thereof that are visible after said finishing step;

a plasticizing agent applied to said intermediate at least prior to said finishing step so as to substantially coat an external surface of said intermediate to form a plasticized layer on said external surface of said dough intermediate, said plasticized layer increasing fluidity of the dough intermediate and restricting dehydration to aid in expansion; and

wherein upon subjecting said dough intermediate to an intermediate heat or energy treatment step, said dough intermediate with said plasticized layer yielding an enhanced crown or cap and BSV of greater than 3 ml/g after a final finishing step.

2. A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said plasticizing agent is butter.

3. A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said plasticizing agent is an oil.

4. A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said plasticizing agent is a liquefied fat.

5. A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said lobes, sections, portions or combinations thereof are formed by cuts extending up to 98% of said dough intermediate.

6. A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said dough intermediate is partially baked prior to releasing said dough intermediate to a retail, wholesale or food service outlet.

7. A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said finishing step is selected from the group that includes baking, frying, heating or combinations thereof.

8. A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said finishing step is baking at a temperature between 325 and 400°F.

9. A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said aesthetic features are lobes on the dough intermediate.

10. A dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said intermediate heat or energy treatment step is par-baking.

11. A dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, wherein said energy treatment is selected from a group including microwave, convection and radiant.

12. A method of preparing a dough intermediate having improved aesthetic and organoleptic properties upon subjecting the dough intermediate to a finishing step, comprising the steps of;

preparing a dough;

creating individual dough intermediates from said dough;

applying a plasticizing agent to a surface of said dough intermediate to form a partially sealed layer on a surface of said dough intermediate;

providing a cutting force to said dough intermediate to form a plurality of lobes, sections, portions and the like;

treating said dough intermediate to a partial finishing step to create a partially baked dough intermediate;

delivering said partially baked dough intermediate to a retail, wholesale or food service outlet; and

subjecting said partially baked dough intermediate to a final finishing step so as to yield a baked product having improved organoleptic and aesthetic properties.

13. A method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, wherein said plasticizing agent is selected from the group including butter, oil, liquefied fat and combinations thereof.

14. A method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, wherein said cutting force is a mechanical cutting force selected from a group including cutting, stamping, slicing or combinations thereof.

15. A method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, wherein said cutting force is selected from a group including ultrasonic, laser, water or air jetting and combinations thereof.

16. A method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, including a further step of applying an additional coating of plasticizing agent to said partially baked dough intermediate after subjecting said partially baked dough intermediate to a final finishing step.

17. A method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 12, wherein the cutting force may be applied prior to application of the plasticising agent.

18. A par-baked dough intermediate having a baked specific volume of at least 3 ml/g, said intermediate having a plasticized layer formed from a butter, oil, liquefied fat or combinations thereof; said plasticized layer coated substantially over an exposed surface of said dough intermediate and said plasticized layer is introduced into centrally disposed cuts and crevices through cutting so as to coat lobes, sections or portions to be formed on said dough intermediate upon being subjected to a

finishing step and said plasticizing layer improves dough fluidity and reduces dehydration of said dough intermediate.